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FOUR
ETHIC EPISTLES

Opposing Some of
Mr. POPE's OPINIONS
OF
M A N,

As set forth in his ESSAY.

- I. With respect to the UNIVERSE.
- II. As an INDIVIDUAL.
- III. With respect to SOCIETY.
- IV. With respect to HAPPINESS.

By Mr. *A Y R E*.



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ETHIC EPISTLES

OF

M. A. N.

As for fourth Essay



I. With reference to Society

II. With reference to Happiness

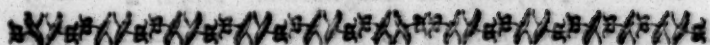
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By Mr. A. R. A.



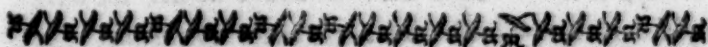
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EPISTLE the FIRST.

First Published in the Year 1739.



The CONTENTS.

Subjects of this nature should be consider'd without any regard to poetry—There is positive evil—All things can have but one original author—The impossibility of the whole being perfect, and not the parts—Presumptive imaginations censur'd—A gradation from Infinite to nothing denied—More cannot be known of a deity than his existence—That generally acknowledged—We cannot comprehend what is infinite—The enquiry after it fruitless—Things self-evident no proper queries—No occasion for any, if all things must be as they are—The mind consider'd without matter—prov'd culpable for things never acted—Morals not always relative—All our good or evil lies in the will—Reason often submitted to it—Instances—There is not an universal harmony—Reason ought never to submit, but govern always—Who asserts the contrary censur'd—and condemned—Human liberty asserted—prov'd—Notions of fatality vanish at the voice of liberty—a proper disposition of the will recommended, and the free use of it excited in man.

FOUR

ETHIC EPISTLES, &c.

EPISTLE the FIRST,

*Opposing some of his Opinions of Man with
respect to the Universe.*

THOUGH POPE has said it, must the
world submit?

Or TRUTH give way to Poetry and Wit?

They put on glaring habits to deceive.

Truth shines in naked modesty, like Eve.

So may my artless verse, nor Thou refuse,

Thou happy Genius! Thou Incarnate Muse!

To lend an Ear, impartial let it be;

Remember philosophic souls are free,

Thy greater Fame has left Thee yet a man,

Prejudice may betray Thee, Error can;

It has: give way ye gentle sounds! give way!

Confess'd your merit, and allow'd your sway;

Hence!

Hence ! with your wreath of palm, inchanters
hence !

And leave your words, with undiminish'd sense :
Far be from me to do such numbers wrong ;
I love the music, but condemn the song :
That tells me *reason* must from *knowledge* flow,
Yet sings of that which man can never know :
That proudly tells me, in my Reason's spight,
Without a proof ; *Whatever is, is right.*

Then right are all the paths which men have
trod,

This makes a *Demon* right as well as *God* ;
Break down the pale, confusion enter in,
If holiness is right, why so is sin :
Should men, should angels all consent to fall,
If universal hell should swallow all,
Still would this *Dogma*, truth and reason's foe,
Say all is right, because it must be so.
That arbitrary *MUST*, is reason's spight,
Why not declare it so, because 'tis right ?
Let him who asks whence *ill*, whence *error* came,
Ask whence came *good*, or whence the *gen'ral frame* ;
Whence *man*, for here, whatever string you strike,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, all will sound alike.
Then *evil* is, and not a perfect whole,
Whose body *nature* is, and *God* the soul ;
Strive e'er so long you cannot hide the cheat,
Of parts imperfect, yet the whole compleat.

Trace

Trace it in the design, examine art,
 Each part, must still be perfect as a part,
 Connect those imperfections ne'er so long,
 'Tis inconclusive, and the whole is wrong.
 And *Thou*, who with imaginary eyes,
 Hast quitted earth, and rush'd into the skies,
 Unpeopled Heaven, made Cherubim rebel,
 And down descended with them into Hell :
 Presumption all ! thy better reason saith,
 This is not knowledge, but thy mode of faith :
 As may perchance, those other sickly dreams,
 Of *chains*, *gradations*, form'd from two extremes,
 Where for each link, some *being* finds a place,
 And fills up all the intermediate space ;
 Call the *arch-angel* from his shining throne,
 Call the wing'd *seraph*——they will humbly own
 Their distance from the majesty on high
 Is infinite, —— and all approach as nigh.

Of such a Being all that can be known,
 Is his existence, that, and that alone ;
 What ? why ? and how ? such questions who can
 name ?

Ask to be *God*, for that is but the same.
 This is the general voice of human kind,
 Who seek him in the *clouds*, or in the *wind*,
 Who bow to *images*, or to the *dead*,
 To *signs*, to *pictures*, or to *wine* and *bread*,

Who

Who seek within *themselves*, and think they find,
 His *glorious image* stamp'd upon their mind :
 Thus is he own'd by all, by all ador'd,
 Then, wondrous poet ! what hast thou explor'd ?
 How hast thou vindicated God to man ?
 By saying what he does, he will and can ;
 Or how is man to understand thy rule ?
To drop into himself, and be a fool.

Enquiries after *infinite*, are vain,
 We barter words for words, and nothing gain ;
 Conceits, conjectures, hurry us too far,
 We place inhabitants in every star :
 New suns, new worlds, as fancy warms, arise,
 And visionary realms, beyond the skies.

How quick, from blindly soaring thus too high,
 We sink to queries, wanting no reply.
 “ *Can finite measure infinite ? Can we*
 “ *Uphold a chain, that makes the whole agree ?*
 “ *Than greater circles, are not lesser, less ?*
 “ *Of things uncertain, can we more than guess ?*
 “ *Why is not man a mite ? why not a star ?*
 “ *And are not all things, just the same they are ?*”
 Why should we ask of earth, why oaks are made
 Taller, and stronger, than the weeds they shade ;
 If this demand, no other answer needs,
 But that the oaks are oaks, and weeds are weeds ?

But leaving matter, and its forms behind,
 Think we on thought, and contemplate the *mind*.

What

What good, or bad, in *moral powers* we call,
 Must be so to themselves, or not at all ;
 So of itself, unalter'd by event,
 What here determines, must be the intent.
 How many *Borgia's*, who were never great !
 How many *Catalines*, in every state !
 How many liberal, who never gave !
 How many tyrants, who could ne'er enslave !
 How many wish mankind, their country, ill !
 Condemn'd, and guilty, it has pass'd their will.
 That all relates to all, we but mistake,
 The *mental powers*, no line, no circle make ;
 Things purpos'd, but not done, or unexpress'd,
 Such can have no relation to the rest :
 Born from the soul, its nature they declare,
 Deform, or beautify, but center there.
 The *will*——'tis there alone our errors lie,
 Too proud, too abject, *if we* creep or fly :
 The *will*——'tis thence alone our good must spring,
 From the mean vassal, to the mighty king :
That, the sole mark of freedom in the soul,
 Bound by no limit, curb'd by no controul.
 Why do blind *bigots* feign more gods than one ?
 The bolder *atheist*,—— why admit of none ?
 Or why have others made their *Gods* from earth ?
 Whose death declar'd them *men*, as well as birth.
 Must we not mock, and laugh that man to scorn,
 Who went to *Crete* to see where *Jove* was born ?

Long before this, his *will* must have subdu'd,
 All proper judgment, and desire of good ;
 The *senses*, first must flatly be denied,
 The *apprehension*, *reason*,—laid aside——
 What greater paradox in words can be,
 Than what I see, is not the thing I see ?
 That groans, and shrieks, and screams, and dying
 cries,
 Are mix'd with something else,—great harmonies ;
 That all the monstrous crimes, which men commit,
 Are *universal order*, just and fit ;
 That earthquakes, whirlwinds, deluges, and flames,
 “ All, all are *order* under other names : ”
 Be how it will, allow the whole unfit,
 Thou say'st, to reason right, is to submit.
 I, in the name of TRUTH, and *reason*, must
 Pronounce this arbitrary, and unjust,
 Pernicious, big with mischief, and design'd
 To darken, damp, and circumscribe the mind :
 A yoke we've long refus'd,—dost thou prepare,
 Which nor our fathers, nor ourselves could bear ;
 Servile submission ! and a blind assent !
 Our souls have taken quite another bent.
 All maxims that *impose*, or would *enslave*,
 Are hateful to us, much beyond the grave ;
 Nor could we deem it an excess of rage,
 To burn, erase, and blot them from the page.

Far

Far other motives move my heart and pen!
 Of *human freedom*, let me speak to men;
Free choice, free will, the bounteous hand of *heaven*,
 To make us masters of ourselves, has given;
 Else all our boasted *reason* sinks at once,
 And makes us level with the senseless stones:
 If powers above, or a supreme decree,
 Impel, or force me, what is that to me?
 No difference in our actions can be known,
 If the great mover makes them all his own.
 " But what if *humble hope* spring in the breast?
 'Tis forc'd, and fatal, and but like the rest:
 Even *faith*, thy other hope, born from the *will*,
 Is this compulsion, this direction still:
 And sentiments, as wide as thine and mine,
 Are all the offspring of the same design.
 Then take back threaten'd pains, and promis'd bliss,
 What can we merit in a state like this?
 Can *beings* forfeit an eternal rest,
 For acting what they must, and for the best?
 Or why is heaven open to a few,
 (Who act not of themselves in what they do;)
 If what seems *chance, design, effect* of *sense*,
 Be the *pre-order'd* works of *providence*?
 Ye thoughts! injurious to your master's fame,
 Back to the *passive mind* from whence ye came!
 Or die at the loud voice of *Liberty*!
 Be bold, O man! for certain *thou art free*.

Down, mix with instinct, grovel with the swine !
 Or mount, and mingle with the powers divine !
 Unhinge this globe of earth, put out the sun !
 Will thou these things, and they to thee are done !

Chuse, for thou mayst, chuse *truth*, the first of
 all,
 Who pain'd with *justice*, only waits thy call !
 Let universal *love*, let *mercy* shine !
 These attributes, tho' *God's*, may yet be thine,
 'Tis the seproclaim thee wise, proclaim thee great,
 And fill up the perfection of thy state.
 Say what impression is thy *choice* to take ?
 Amazing Being ! *made, thyself to make.*
 The very *source of power* is lodg'd in thee,
 Be bold, O man ! for certain **THOU ART FREE.**

EPISTLE

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

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EPISTLE the SECOND,

Opposing some of his Opinions of Man as an Individual.

KNOW all thou canst, nor timorously go
 To ask what things are *fit* for thee to know ;
 All found within the circle of thine eye,
 All where thy busy thoughts can farthest pry,
 To thee belongs ; and every thing forbid
 Is hid from thee, and will be always hid ;
 Was science only to thy self confin'd,
 Thy self would only offer to the mind ;
 What it perceives, *thought, matter, good, or ill,*
That is its science, be it what it will.
 NEWTON, great friend to *Truth!* plead thou this cause,
 Tell us, when searching nature's various laws,
 Was *man* thy *only science* ? Learn we then
 To ape the *angels*, when we study *men* ?
 Or didst thou secret paths to truth explore,
 And dauntless tread where none had trod before ?
 The *sciences* in view, on either side
Ideas throug'd, and *wisdom* was thy guide.
 No check, no law stopp'd thy inquiring sight,
 Thine eye had *visual power*, and there was *light* ;

That

That light shone on thee, *order* was thy state ;
 Thou wast not *darkly wise*, nor *rudely great*.

With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,
With too much knowledge for a Stoic's pride ;
Without a doubt to act, or be at rest,

He deem'd himself no part of God nor beast ;
To his frail body cou'd his mind prefer,

That born to die, this reas'ning not to err :

Averse to ignorance, his reason such,
Who thought so well, could never think too much

Dark chaos fled, and every thought confus'd !

The self-abus'd, by him were disabus'd :

Created all to rise, or all to fall,

Not lord of all things nor a prey to all ;

A judge of truth, then not in error hurld,

No jest till now, nor riddle of the world.

A change in nature, never was his aim ;

He knew his strength, and conquer'd where he came,

Did he attempt to regulate the sun ?

For what ? He knew already that was done.

Said he the planets my commands obey ?

Or but discover, not direct their way ?

When they began, or when will leave to roll,

Exceeds the bounds prescrib'd an human soul ;

But then, to fix HER MOVEMENTS, that, indeed,

Does greater limits, greater bounds exceed.

With wisdom, how might man advance in art !

Were folly not her inmate in the heart ?

The

The web, that *wisdom* in the day has spun,
 Too oft, by *folly* is at night undone :
 Thus *modern priests* Platonic steps have trod,
 And quitted *sense*, to learn *the things of God* ;
 Like *eastern rites* their adorations pay,
 As if the *sun* were truly *god* of day ;
 Still to the *east* they turn their list'd eyes,
 And find less glory in the western skies.
 Excuse this superstition how you can,
 But fix it not, without reserve, on *man*.

All human souls have *reason* to restrain :
 In most, by turns, the various *passions* reign ;
 Where each succeeds to each, and where not one
 Always predominates, and sometimes none :
 Does always *rage* inflame ? or *pity* melt ?
 No, there are *passions* some have never felt ;
 At times, the strongest lull'd and dormant lie,
 But *reason* always wakes, and will be by :
 Self-love itself, when was it felt unmix'd ?
 Or who determines where its point is fix'd ?
 Suppose at *pleasure*, if the mind is pleas'd
 With good, — 'tis healthy, — otherwise diseas'd ;
 Your-self a friend to *morals* would you prove ?
 Conceal what does, and tell what ought to move ;
 Glorious indeed, and godlike we confess
 Self-love to be, that loves the whole no less,
 Without restraint, 'tis *reason* in the soul,
 Who loves her self, because she loves the whole ;

Best passion, from best motive, thus she gains,
 For *reason* urges here, and not restrains.
Reason is always known by virtue's dress,
 The passions oft are vicious through excess ;
 These undeliberate motions of the mind,
 Can force us wrong, but first they make us blind ;
 Fierce anger then, hot lust, despair, and fear,
 Through ways of danger rush with swift career.
 O *reason* ! stop these guides, and take their place,
 They should but be companions in the race ;
 Lead thou, but first restore the blind to sight,
 And set the misled traveller a-right :
 Stronger than thee what passion can we call ?
 Thy power is greater, and disposes all ;
 Bright queen ! who can, and ought to rule the soul,
 The spring, the scale, and balance of the whole.

No-meaning wits, are wits without a name,
 And many busy schoolmen just the same ;
 Let them unite their powers, or disunite,
 Fight for themselves, or teach their friends to fight ;
 Let them call virtue, grace, grace, what they please.
 Good only pleasure, or the love of ease :
 Why name we these ? from such we never can
 Draw rules of life, or patterns fit for man :
 How easy by appeal to them you'll prove
 The passions all but modify'd self-love ;
 At length, retiring Virtue leaves the breast,
 Unfit for exercise, yet not at rest ;

But

But dire chimera's terrify the mind,
Gods mounting storms, and walking on the wind;
 Then passions whirl, and with destructive blast
 Ravage the parts by parts, and all at last.
 Passions, like elements may all unite,
 Let *reason* blend them, and the work is right;
 Let hope and fear, and grief, and joy be there,
 If *reason* draw the picture, all is fair.

One darling passion, starving all the rest,
 Is but a vicious monster in the breast,
 Not born in man, nor gave him with his breath,
 Not fix'd to rule, or follow him till death:
Habit and will have let a tyrant in,
Reason and will can soon dethrone again;
 Wit, faculties, come in to *reason's* aid,
 The passion dies, or is no more obey'd:
 The reigning passion still is *reason's* foe,
 Who here to rectify must overthrow.

Proud heroes, prouder monks, and tyrant kings,
 Discover whence their seeming virtue springs!
 Tell us, the means that tend to what they aim
 Are what they act, and leave the world to name!
 The monk can act the tyrant, saint or brave,
 The tyrant, king, the hero, monk or slave;
 And thus alike must all be understood,
 Who doing ill do accidental good:
 To them who reason, how can there appear
 A stock to graft on, or a virtue here!

Curst

Curst be all civil, all religious pride,
 Spring whence they will, or howfoe'er ally'd;
 Have they a greater or a less allay,
 Produce they what they will, accurst be they!

Heav'n gives to man, (else cou'd he stand or fall?)
 Nor vice, nor virtue, but the power of all;
 The power of good, of leaving good for ill,
 And TITUS reigns a NERO if he will;
 In any *Roman* what is term'd *divine*,
 Had had the same effect in CATILINE.
 How say we then, the same destroys, or saves?
 Ambitious *patriots*! what are they but knaves?
 Thus *vice* and *virtue* are but wrong and right
 Offer'd the mind, as objects to the sight;
 The cheat, the villain, they who live by blood,
 Declare by facts their actions to be good.
 The honest man, afraid of ill-got pelf,
 Who turns the lifted scale against himself;
 Who orphan-cries, and widows sighs can hear,
 And own compassion with a mingling tear;
 Who lengthens his out stretched arm to give,
 And bids the dying hungry eat and live;
 Whose basket at the prison door you see,
 Who feeds, and cloaths, and sets the captive free;
 Whose justice is a friend, and guardian too,
 And keeps back fraud, to suffer, or to do;
 Whose social mind darts rays on every side,
 The shame, the enemy, and death of pride,
(Practice.

(*Practice owns virtue, more than words imply*)

He lives the T R U T H, the vicious act a L Y E.

To find the point of *vice* on this depends:
At falshood, fix, where truth, where virtue ends.

Who kills his father, does not he deny

All bond of duty, and the filial tie?

Or he who stifles reason all he can,

Deny its dictate, and himself a man?

Extreme of *vice*! for *vice* is all extreme,

But *virtue* always in the golden mean.

Can who *assumes* philosophy pretend

That these antipathies can mix and blend?

That human wit sometimes can scarcely say,

Which is the ore, and which is the alloy?

And heaven destroying the effect of *vice*,

Makes no distinction, or it grows too nice;

Or leaves it thus, if what we *virtue* call

Has some effect, yet *vice* has none at all.

Stop here, nor human frailties happy name,

Oh! build not up our glory on our shame;

Teach me to hate the rashness of the chief,

The king's presumption, and the crowd's belief:

Let courage, justice, knowledge be our theme,

The chief, the king, the crowd command esteem:

Thus shall we reason, nor our pens employ

To prove that *folly* is a state of joy;

Have we not seen her painful vigils keep,

And waste the midnight lamp to sigh and weep?

Her

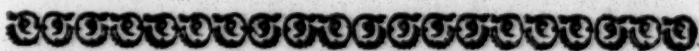
Her cup brimful of tears, and running o'er,
 Her grief a bubble, and her tears no more.
 To man, the mirth or sorrow of a fool
 Is no example, no, 'tis ridicule.

Turn, turn from hence thy sight, and now begin
 To know thy self, that knowledge is within ;
 Within is kept an inquisition court,
 Where conscience suffers from her own report ;
 Great voluntary witness of the heart !
 Tis she alone can tell thee what thou art,
 Shew thee thy consciousness of good and ill,
 Thy powers, *perception, reason, judgment, will* ;
 The knowledge of those powers, their force and use,
 Their moral beauty, possible abuse ;
 Blest intuition ! what a glorious scene
 In nature opens, when we look within !
 What sees my soul ! *The Maker's hand impress,*
And vital breath from heaven inform the breast :
 Then sound another TRUTH, sound to the skies,
That man is not a FOOL, shews GOD IS WISE.

EPISTLE



EPISTLE the THIRD.



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Wisdom makes us good and happy.

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EPISTLE the THIRD.

*Opposing some of his Opinions of the Nature and
State of Man with respect to Society.*

HEAR, froward muse, and yet the soul of
song,

Assume thy wonted pride, and come along,

Come shoring in thy little bark behind,

Direct the foremost, wisest of mankind,

Blow painted bubbles swelling to the eye,

That shine, and change, and shatter as they fly !

“ Connected all—thou say’st — It must be so,

“ And therefore is, whatever creed says no ;

“ Atoms attracted, each with life endued,

“ Whatever they produce, is general good ;

“ Is chaos come again ? eternal night ?

“ Then forms are perish’d, and confusion’s right ;

“ Call it a chain, and make the whole depend,

“ Pronounce unknown, its parts, its rise, its end,

“ Unknown, dull fool ! back to thy shallows creep,

“ Attempt not thou to fathom this great deep.

“ Observe how savage beasts are slaves to man,

“ They serve, and cloath, and eat him, if they can ;

“ Beasts stand in need of man, made for their use,

“ And treat him as he treats a pamper’d goose.

“ Thus every creature, every creature wants,

“ And ants were made for men, and men for ants,

D

“ Sons

" Sons all of nature, yes, vile worm! proud mite!
 " Thou very warst of every thing that's right!
 " Brutes by great instinct, certain good can see,
 " Uncheated live, and only die like thee;
 " Unaw'd by all thy fears of death, or worse,
 " That makes thy immortality a curse;
 " Go envy them, and set thy reason by,
 " Nor vainly use it first, in asking why."

The voluntier, great bard, will speak and tell
 That chosen good, alone—is doing well.
 Enquirer, learn! the universal cause,
 Which governs matter by mechanic laws,
 To blended elements has giv'n pow'r
 To vegetate a stone, a plant, a flow'r,
 The end, man's use, if nothing intervene,
 But these may die, and that remain unseen,
 The waste of nature—is it nature's care,
 To call for violets here, or roses there?
 Does she on seas expect large barks to fail?
 Or did she make the canvass for the gale?

" All, as it is, is right, and would be right,
 " Destroy'd, or alter'd, and inverted quite."
 What more the oracle that fills thy song,
 Than boasted right, opposing nothing wrong?
 Remember well, you cannot hide the cheat,
 Of parts imperfect, yet the whole compleat.
 If all at last be right, then why remain
 Human or angel spirits doom'd to pain?

The chain stupendous, where the whole agrees,
 Is it in part upheld by such as these?
 Fill they the links? connect they with the whole?
 Are they related to our God?—our soul?
 Must ill eternal, rage, despair, and spight,
 Help to sustain, and be eternal right?
 Yet be eternal wrong, eternal ill,
 For here's your ultimate, say what you will.

Observe the *chain of hate*, for all things hate,
 Antipathies are found to every state;
 Yes, all things hate, and all are hated too,
 And strife, and death, run all creation through;
 The same in morals, there are foes of God's,
 He theirs, to punish with eternal rods,
 Some hate what others love, and some detest
 What ought to be esteem'd, and lov'd the best;
 Is it thy pride, that thou art one of these
 Resolv'd to blacken all thou canst not please?
 O had thy lyre been tun'd to *other strains*,
 And hymn'd the throne where *truth* and *reason* reigns,
 Thy utmost thirst of praise, thy utmost pride,
 Demand extensive! had been satisfied.
 Hate follows him who arrogates a name,
 And blows a trumpet in the face of fame.

All art is nature, thought to matter join'd,
 Which raises *forms*, the *creatures of the mind*,
 Art closely follows matters strictest laws,
 Yet acts by *will*, for that's the moving cause;

Unmix'd with ill, we nothing good behold,
 There's always great allay in moral gold.
 For proofs of *truth*, we oft to *falsehood* fly;
 And fancy something to determine by,
Straight lines, true circles—where do they exist?
 The hand, the pen, the compass always mis'd,
 Distant as God, and only in the mind,
 The seat of knowledge, there ye seek and find.

Why am I told a tale of birds and beasts,
 Their joy, their pastime, and their flow'ry feasts?
Instinct in them, or fallible, or no,
 Serves them like *reason*, and they use it so;
Instinct——and what is *reason* man not free?
Instinct is *reason* and *necessity*:
 Believe not man with such a weight oppress'd,
 An *active principle* informs his breast,
Freedom his *will*, his natural state is strife,
 Like embryo atoms bursting into life,
 A *selfish creature*——jealous——not a fool
 Sees others govern'd by the self-same rule,
 So wisely sooths the ill he can't remove,
 And *barter* *social love* for *social love*:
 Thus rose communities, thus cities rose,
 And they dy'd friends, who first encounter'd foes.
 Thus *wisdom* causes *universal love*,
 Man's *wisdom*, not an *influence from above*,

Not

Not learn'd from brutes, for what the brutes can
teach,

Is human knowledge, and within its reach:
And think not man so wanting to his good.
But he had found his *physic* out, and *food*,
Untaught by moles, had learn'd to *use the plow*,
And *wove* tho' *worms* were not, as well as now.

If *Jerome* raves, or *hermits* tell their dreams,
Must all mankind be judg'd by those extremes?
“*Whatever is is right*——if that be true,
The consequence of all must be so too,
There is no real *ill*, or if there were,
'Tis purg'd in *Limbo*, or the *Lord knows where*.

The thoughts of *good* and *ill* deserve our care,
Chuse we the good, for *happiness* is there;
Examine all things freely, till we find,
What *beauty* is, and then *adorn* our mind,
Leave idle *speculation* to the *monk*,
Or be it *extasy*, for then he's *drunk*.
Let real *knowledge*, be in sight pursued,
Know all, for *knowledge*, tho' of *ill* is good.
Look up, for nothing is too great or high,
The powers above thee never dread a spy;
Fear not comparison, if thou can'st see
Some small relation 'twixt those powers and thee,
Have they a *will* that governs all their powers,
And governs wisely? let it tutor ours;

Are

Are they *intuitive*, and is their bliss
 Self-center'd, all internal happiness,
Ideal pity that would call to bliss
 Ten thousand sinful worlds as well as this ?
 So mercy in the great creator mov'd,
And love, e'er creatures were, to be belov'd,
 Such as the mind, such is the creatures state,
Meer power is nothing, all that's good is great.

Will general good ! nor let religion's name,
 Cheat thee implicitly, to praise, or blame ;
 Let *truth*, not *modes of faith*, be studied most,
 So *know*, and *teach*, and not *believe*, and *boast*,
 Shine forth, *thou single soul !* the *light* is there,
 For all who follow *truth* like her are *fair* ;
 Object belov'd of moral thought ! *great queen !*
 Who never asks to be believ'd unseen :
 Turn here, ye *zealots*, hither turn, and bend,
 For nothing else can *bless mankind*, or *mend*.

Who first taught men that *truths* might be too
 bold,
 Themselves had *bolder falsehoods* to be sold,
 They form'd a *heaven*, of which they kept the *keys*,
 Where none must enter, but as *churchmen* please,
Dead bones and *rags* they turn'd into a trade,
 And *pray'rs of saints*, which they themselves had made,
 The image mov'd, it sweat, it groan'd, and wept,
 And *frown'd* in visions when the *sinner* slept ;

Till

Till *superstition* made the *idols* great,
 And hundreds started up in every state ;
 The poor an *offering* at their shrines let fall,
 The rich gave *charity*, till *all* gave *all* :
 And now from every *convent*, *chapel*, *cell*,
 They offer *heaven* to sale, and threaten *hell* ;
 The *caterpillar* friars, the *locust* tribe,
 In *names of saints* who boldly take a bribe,
 To turn departed souls aside from hell,
 Or make fools think they do, and that's as well,
 Who hate communities, and social ties,
 And live a tasteless life of pious lies,
 To vaunt of visions, tho' they're total blind,
 To damn and cheat, and not increase their kind ;
 No longer men——the bane of age and youth,
 Sworn foes to *human nature*, and to *truth* ;
 From these, *O rational !* thyself defend,
 For they are not of *God*, nor can they mend.

Observe the various *passions* as they move,
 But cherish most a justified *self-love* ;
Self-love, the noblest passion of the mind,
 Its motive must be that of *all mankind*,
 That makes it amiable——and can I do
 What's best by choice, and not approve it too ?
 But hark ! what voice directs ?——*let man be free*,
And truth, and falsehood, good, and evil be :
Let order still keep up the general frame,
And social love, and wisdom be the same !

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HAPPINESS *how discoursed of by Solomon — not attainable — What Men call so often purchased viciously — Understanding and Common Sense denied to be it — Order — mistakes about it in a moral Regard — Free-will in Man — how he may prove himself a Being universally benevolent — Virtue without any Object to work on but Thought — Virtue relates only to the Happiness arising from itself — The Beauty of Virtue — Seldom happy — of Futurity — the Sum total of all Knowledge recommended without Fear of Presumption, or any other Reserve.*

EPISTLE the FOURTH.

*Opposing some of his Opinions of the Nature
and State of Men with respect to Happiness,*

O HAPPINESS ! if by that name be meant
Continual pleasure, peace, and true content,
Stop here the search, *thou vain enquirer ! Cease,*
O thou ! who never yet hadst *health, or peace.*
Ask the * *wise king* where *happiness* is found,
And follow him thro' life's fantastic round.
But understand, before we part from hence,
That he had *health, and peace, and competence ;*
Even *peace,* except that definition word
Means *happiness,* for that would be absurd ;
Thou with the learned, would'st but little less
Than say, that *happiness is happiness.*

* *Solomon* is not here mentioned, thinking to give more authority to his words, as speaking by the dictate of any spirit but his own, but only as a man whom *Mahometans, Jews, and Christians* (who are so great a part of the inhabitants of the globe) will allow to have been as wise a man as *Mr. Pope*, which the more plainly is made to appear by his fine reflections on the false and imaginary notions conceiv'd of happiness.

He had, to bring our terms to nearer sense,
Society, and health, and competence,
Riches, the treasure of the Hebrew land,
And regal power, an absolute command:

Trace we this king, and hear him thus complain,
 "Wisdom, and knowledge, life itself is vain,
 "Man born to sorrow, all his days are grief,
 "The slumber of the night brings no relief,
 "His heart still labours, tho' his eyes are clos'd,
 "And half his weary soul is uncompos'd.
 "Thirst we for future fame? the world will say,
 "The wise man, or the fool—who liv'd a day
 "Till both forgotten, *for alike they fall,*
 "Remain, *as if they had not been at all.*

*But feels not man a something in his breast,
 A peace, a pleasure, a content, a rest?"*

We grant it, many thousands do, but still,
 Like other earthly good, 'tis mix'd with ill;
 It has been bought, bought at a wicked price;
 And torn from virtue oft bestow'd on vice.

In thinking, who is happiest of the throng?
Art thou? Am I? Yet one is surely wrong,
 Still give me leave to differ, if you please,
 "Not always common sense is common ease".

Re-

Remember, man ! whatever be the cause,
 That *will* is thine, and that prescribes thy laws,
Limits restrain thy *power* of ill and good
 But *will* may act, and cannot be withstood.
 Suppose I *will*, and *wish* it in my power,
 To make creation happy from this hour,
 “ Let all- man - reptile - spirit - brute - the whole
 “ *With*, or *without*, or *reason*, or a *soul*,
 “ That have existed, do, or ever may
 “ Be always blest——ye foes to wisdom, say,”
 Is this *Benevolence* ? the *will* requires,
 No other objects but its own desires,
 In deserts where no other foot had trod,
 Sweet solitude ! a man might walk with God,
 Have every *virtue* lively in his breast,
 And blessings on the creatures, *unexpressed*,
 Might in *idea* set the prisoner free,
 And trace thy footsteps, heavenly charity !
 Invite the hungry, thirsty, naked,—all,
 Like that of heaven, an universal call,
 Impute it to him——if he leans to ill
 Impute it, sin, the error of his will.
 “ *Order is heaven’s first law*”—’tis true, what then ?
 That *order* does not mean *degrees of men*,
 Must one be lord of millions ?—No such thing ;
 What proves that ever God *ordained a king* ?
 The sacred name of heaven while men profane,
 Observe what *Philips* and *Don Carlo’s* reign,

(If

(If *kings*, prove *tyrants*, or a *pope* the *devil*
 To make them part of *order*, that's too civil)
 Some *richer*, *wiser* some, for every man
 Of life's bad stations fills the best he can ;
 Order was just the same, we all must own,
 Before *Excisemen* or *excise* were known.
 The moral law insists on no degree,
 Think like a *sage*, or *monk*, and you are he.
 We govern *will*, before *will* governs us,
 To act, no power *commands* it *thus*, or *thus* ;
 And new degrees may every day arise,
 The rich be poor, and convert fools be wise,
 The *chain* may *shift* its *links*, and men express
 New *ways*, new *forms*, new *thoughts* of *happiness*.

Where art thou *happiness* ? thou ocean theme !
 Found neither in the mean, nor the extreme,
 Talk'd of but never known—to St. John go,
 Dwells happiness with thee ? he answers, no :
 Seek here for happiness ? I thought you wise,
 'Tis smooth contempt, and pride in thin disguise.

'Tis *happy* to be good, so far is well
 But *Falkland*, was not *happy* that he fell.
 To man give *virtue* : *health* and *food* deny
 Life's common comforts, all *society*,
 Shut out the elements, the air, the fire,
 The stream ; and see he wishes to expire :
 Though all allow you *virtue* in the man,
 Call him *content*, or *happy*, if you can.

Vir-

Virtue gives peace—the peace that virtue gives,
 But not all other ; there your error lives,
 And as to what you say of *virtue's fame*,
 'Tis better far to have her than the *name*,
 The *name* from many doubtful to obtain
 What needs a *witness* if we *virtue* gain ?
Virtue that sweetens profit with delight
 Checks false conclusions, and determines right ;
 Fixed in the *will*, and in the *judgment* too,
 Dispers'd and blended all our *alma* through,
 All that is *right* in man—for all the rest,
 Is *wrong*, *unmeaning*, *trifling*, or a *jest*.
Vice is the *knowledge* first, then *choice* of *ill*
Virtue the good which we embrace by *will*,
 Yet *virtuous men* (or else *Historians* feign)
 Have seldom liv'd without their share of *pain*,
 But always with the *vicious* and the *fool*,
 Stood *time* and *chance*, and contradict *thy rule*.

Of other worlds less apt to speak, I wait,
 And *doubt* with *patience*, till I *change my state*
 Left with *imagination's wings* I fly,
 Through endless *empty air*, and miss the *sky*.

O may my *glory* all from *science* flow !
 And fix me in a *heaven*, where I may *know*,
Know, not *believe*, *suppose* a *sovereign good*,
 (For *Faith's* a *weakness* but of *flesh* and *blood*)

Once

Once manumitted from this clog of clay,
 Unveil my eyes, and let me face the day,
 No truth too strong, there's nothing shines too bright
Above, whatever is *above* is right;
 Speak we of *physical* or *moral* ill
 Come down from thence, again arraign the will
 Arraign, condemn—if *wisdom* be thy claim,
Nature and *wisdom* always speak the same,
 Not *nature* deviates, but is *drawn aside*
 By *false Philosophy*, *false faith* and *pride*,
 Without a wound from *nature* Sidney bled,
 Or say did *nature* ask the *Baptist's* head?
Nature's corruption, St. *John*, or thy will,
 Which was it, brought to pass the *schism* bill?

Look not for *happiness*, remember still
 That every *earthly good* is mix'd with *ill*;
 That *Truth* is *Virtue*; all *mens actions* free,
 Himself a creature *wise* in *some degree*,
 That order reigns thro' matter's well built frame
 And *social love* and *wisdom* but the same
 That *virtue* makes us *good*, not blest below
 And *knowledge* lawful all that *man* can know.

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